

grasping a possibility, which the already acquired
 treasure of
 words and forms, and the habit of their use,
 suggest and put
 within reach/'¹ " Every single item of alteration, of
 whatever
 kind, and of whatever degree of importance, goes
 back to some
 individual or individuals who set it in circulation,
 from whose
 example it gained a wider and wider currency, until
 it finally won
 that general assent, which is alone required in
 order to make
 anything in language proper and authoritative/'²
 These state-
 ments might be applied to any of the folkways. The
 statements
 on page 46 of Whitney's book would serve to
 describe and
 define the mores. This shows to what an extent
 language is a
 case of the operation by which mores are
 produced. They are
 always devices to meet a need, which are
 imperceptibly modified
 and unconsciously handed down through the
 generations. The
 ways, like the language, are incorporeal things.
 They are borne
 by everybody and nobody, and are developed by
 everybody and
 nobody. Everybody has his little peculiarities of
 language. Each
 one has his peculiarities of accent or pronunciation
 and his pet
 words or phrases. Each one is suggesting all the
 time the use of
 the tricks of language which he has adopted. "
 Nothing less than
 the combined effort of a whole community, with all
 its classes
 and orders, in all its variety of characters,
 circumstances, and
 necessities, is capable of keeping in life a whole
 language."³
 " Every vocable was to us [children] an arbitrary
 and conven-
 tional sign; arbitrary, because any one of a
 thousand other
 vocables could have been just as easily learned by
 us and asso-
 ciated with the same idea; conventional, because
 the one we
 acquired had its sole ground and sanction in the

consenting use
of the community of which we formed a part/'⁴ "
We do not,
as children, make our language for ourselves. We
get it by
tradition, all complete. We think in sentences. As
our lan-
guage forms sentences, that is, as our mother-
tongue thinks, so
we learn to think. Our brain, our entire thought-
status, forms
itself by the mother-tongue, and we transmit the
same to our
children/'⁵ Nature men have only petty coins of
speech. They

¹ Whitney, *Language*, 46.
23.

² *Ibid.*) 44. * *Ibid.*)
* *Itid.*, 14.

⁵ Schultze, *Psychologie der Naturvölker*, 96.